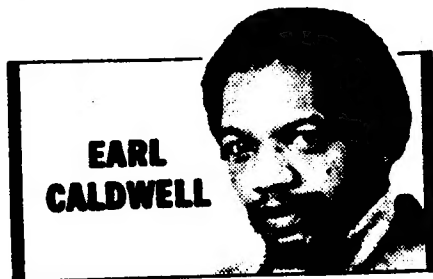


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Tales from out of Africa



EARL
CALDWELL

IN HIS INTRODUCTION, Samori Marksman searched for the word to describe the moment. He said it was "unusual" and then, to make that stronger, he called it "unprecedented." Neither word was strong enough. What happened at the Harriet Tubman School in Harlem on Saturday was mind-boggling.

Since the black liberation movements were spawned more than 25 years ago, there have been suspicions of illegal activity by the CIA across the continent of Africa.

On many occasions, leaders of those

movements came to Harlem and stood in the auditorium in the Harriet Tubman School and made serious charges against the CIA.

But until Saturday, they were only charges, with almost nothing to back them up.

John Stockwell changed all that in two hours on Saturday that were, for those who were there, mind-boggling. Stockwell is a former high-ranking agent in the CIA. He was a GS-14 ("That's like a colonel") and a station chief, and once he was so high up in CIA work that he sat in on meetings of the National Security Council. On Saturday, Stockwell came to Harlem and before a packed house in the auditorium at the Harriet Tubman School, he told incredible stories of CIA dirty work. He focused on Africa and he said all the suspicions and charges, as serious as they have been, do not even begin to tell half of what the CIA has done in Africa. And the bottom line of the story he told was that he was there. He was on the inside. In Angola, he headed the CIA operation that conducted what he called "an invisible war" against the government the United States wanted overthrown.

Stockwell's telling of CIA secrets is not entirely new. He gave testimony to a congressional committee that he says should have put Henry Kissinger and former CIA Director William Colby in jail. He also put all of his record of CIA law-breaking on paper and that was published in his book, "In Search of Enemies." But his appearance in Harlem, as Samori Marksman (of The African-Caribbean Resource Center) said, was unusual and unprecedented.

He told how the CIA worked to overthrow governments in the Congo (now Zaire), in Angola and in Ghana. Stockwell (who grew up in Africa) went to Angola after serving in Vietnam. He had been a Marine and he said he looked on joining the CIA as "going to graduate school." In Angola (where he headed the operation) he said the CIA worked hand in hand with the government of South Africa. "We brought in the South African Army," he said. He said Cuban leader Fidel Castro sent 42,000 troops to Angola and "eventually sent the South African Army packing."

Of the involvement in Angola, he said Russia, Cuba and the Chinese all admitted to involvement in Angola. "The United States lied," he said. He said the American government refused to acknowledge any role. "The truth had nothing to do with it; we were vying for people's minds," he said.

STOCKWELL SAID the United States has 50 covert actions going, including 13 that are very large. He mentioned Nicaragua as one of the large efforts and said the United States is on the brink of war in Central America.

"How can you do this? How can you come here and say these things?" Stockwell was asked on Saturday.

"I go where I'm invited," he said.

In Harlem, where he was invited to speak on Saturday, it turned out to be mind-boggling.